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BOW CHURCH 1880.

Memorials of

THE PARISH CHURCH OF BOW;

OR

ST. MARY STRATFORD BOW,

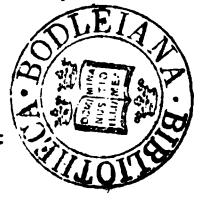
COMMONLY CALLED

BOW CHURCH.

BY THE

REV. W. P. INSLEY, M.A.,

RECTOR OF BOW, AND FELLOW OF SION COLLEGE, LONDON.



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PREFACE.

I can hardly venture to expect, though I should be glad to learn otherwise, that much of what is contained in the following pages will have more than a local interest, and indeed the primary object of this little work is to show the parishioners of Bow how historically interesting is the venerable edifice which stands in their midst. Still, it is possible that this may come into other hands than those of the Residents in the immediate neighbourhood, and it seems necessary, therefore, to explain to them that it was written for those who were acquainted with and interested in the locality to which it relates; and consequently some knowledge of the names of places and persons mentioned has been assumed. For the benefit of strangers,

however, I will just add that the Parish of Bow or St. Mary Stratford Bow, stands at the extreme eastern point of the County of Middlesex, and is bounded by the River Lea, which divides Middlesex from Essex. The Church, a conspicuous object in that part of London, is within a hundred yards of the banks of the River, and is universally called in its own neighbourhood "Bow Church," while the bridge which spans the River behind it is still known, as it was in the days of Defoe, as "Bow Bridge."

In addition to the foregoing explanation I have also to acknowledge my obligation to my friend and predecessor, the Rev. G. T. Driffield, for interesting information on several points.

THE RECTORY, BOW, E.
March, 1885.

MEMORIALS OF "BOW CHURCH."

Laudator temporis acti.

Horace, de Arte Poet

They dreamt not of a perishable home,
Who thus did build.

Few things are more interesting to the lover of History than the search into the actual relics of days long past and gone. Old Buildings, Monuments, and Records have each their story to tell, if their inscriptions can but be rightly deciphered or their characteristics correctly traced. Silent witnesses they are of the ages which have fled; but witnesses whose silence may be rendered eloquent, if it be correctly translated by one who has studied them with affectionate interest and care. Such an attempt has been briefly made in the following pages with respect to the Old Parish Church of Bow.

The name of Bow, Bowe, Bogh or le Bow, as it is variously written, is derived from the bridge built over the River Lea about the year 1110 or 1130, and attributed by popular consent to the Empress Maud, daughter of Henry I, who is said to have built it in consequence of her narrow escape from drowning when fording the river. Leland, however, who lived in the Reign of Henry VIII, and is usually a most trustworthy authority, states that the bridge, which he says was one of the first stone bridges ever erected in England, was built—not by the Empress Maud—but by her mother, Queen Matilda, wife of Henry I, and describes it as having been built at Stratford, afterwards called from this Stratford de Arcubus, or Stratford le Bow—the Latin word *Arcubus* or *Arcus* signifying both "Arch" and "Bow." I cannot do better than quote his words. "Matilda, wife of Henry I, having herself been well washed in the water, caused two bridges to be builded in a place one mile distant from the old ford, of the which one was situated over Lee, at the head of the town of Stratford, nowe called Bowe, a rare piece of work, for before that time the like had never been seen in

England."* This latter account, after a careful investigation of the probabilities of the case, though sorry to disturb a venerable tradition, I am inclined to prefer. The Empress Maud passed a considerable portion of her earlier life in Germany, and was certainly living there at the reputed date of the erection of the bridge; whereas Queen Matilda, who was Saxon by birth, and was much attached to and beloved by her English subjects, was Abbess of the Convent of Barking; and in her visitations of that Institution, would frequently have had occasion to cross the River Lea, as she travelled from London, and had doubtless often experienced the dangers and inconveniences of the ford.†

The name of Stratford is a corruption of Straight or Strait ford, and is derived as follows. Before any bridge existed over the river Lea, travellers from London to Essex, journeying along the road where the Bow Road runs now, on arriving at the river,

* Leland's Collectanea.

† This bridge of Queen Matilda's was in existence until some fifty years ago, when, having become dilapidated and beginning to be regarded as unsafe, it was removed to make way for the present structure.

had to turn aside to cross it at a ford which was situated somewhere between the present Bow Bridge and Hackney Marshes; but after a time another ford was made or discovered more in a line with the highway, which enabled travellers to cross it without deflecting their course; and this latter ford, came to be spoken of as 'the straight ford,' while the former one was called 'the old ford. (It was at the 'straight ford' that Queen Matilda must have had her escape from drowning). In course of time these characteristics gave the names to the respective localities of Stratford and Old Ford, and in later times the former seems to have been written Stratford atte Bowe, as we find it called in Chaucer, who lived between 1350 and 1400, when it seems to have been known as a place where the effects of the Norman Conquest were still so strongly felt, that some of the inhabitants spoke a *patois* of the French language.

> And French she spoke ful fayre and felisle,
> After the schole of Stratforde atte Bowe—
> For French of Parish [sc: Paris] was to hire unknowe.
>
> CANTERBURY TALE.

Evidently 'the father of English Poetry' was acquainted with the peculiarities of the Bow of his

own time. The school here meant was probably a neighbouring convent. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the name of Old Ford appears to have been written as one word—Oldford; for so we find it in Defoe's 'Memoirs of the Plague,' written about 1665; and so it is written on one of the monuments of the Church—that erected to Thomas Rust, who died in 1704. We in the nineteenth century have reverted to the original mode of writing it, by separating its syllables again into distinct words, and superadding to each of them the dignity of capital letters.

Of the foundation or early history of the Church, which is dedicated to St. Mary, but little is known. Lysons,* from the Chantry Return, states that the Chapel of Stratford Bow was founded by King Edward III, on a piece of ground which formed part of the King's highway: but Newcourt† places the date of its erection earlier. He says that in 1311 the Parishes of the Hamlet (one of the 'Tower Hamlets' and then doubtless deserving of the name) made a representation to Ralph Baldock, Bishop of

* Environs of London. † Repertorium Eccl.

London, stating that by reason of their distance from the Parish Church of Stepney, (of which Parish Bow was then a portion) and the difficulties of the way, chiefly caused by the floods, they were not able to come to the Divine Offices, upon which the said Bishop granted them his licence, dated Dec. 15th, 1311, to erect a chapel on the King's highway. There is certainly among the Chantry Rolls a record of uncertain date, though clearly prior to the Reformation, of the gifts of certain individuals towards the maintenance of the Priest and Obite of Stratford at Bowe.

It seems tolerably certain, then, that a chapel existed at Bow during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the site of which was probably identical with that now occupied, but of this nothing now remains. No part of the present structure, judging from its architecture, is older than the closing years of the fifteenth century—about 1480 or 1490—and the only portions which can be with justice regarded as even so early as that date are the lower part of the tower, the chancel, the roof of the nave, and the lower walls of the aisles. Most of the rest is later

work, executed at various periods and in diverse styles of architecture. But the west doorway and west window in the Tower are held to be extremely good specimens of their kind, and the arch in the interior of the Tower will bear comparison with some of the arches of Westminster Abbey, which were erected about the same time, the reign of Henry the Seventh. There is this further historical confirmation of the fact on record. In 1497 the people of Bow desired to make their Church independent of the Mother Church of Stepney, to which it was obliged to pay certain dues or taxes; but in the case, which was tried in some Ecclesiastical Court of the period, they were worsted, and ordered to continue their payments. Now, what more likely than that the people of Bow, having just become possessed of a new Church, should desire to be independent and be formed into a separate parish, free from the control of, and obligation to pay dues to Stepney, the benefits of union with which parish were henceforth all on one side? Since that date, however, the Church has undergone so much repair at different periods, that but little of any part can be considered to be pure

fifteenth century work. The South aisle from the from the better state of preservation in which it remains seems almost to be of later date, though it is probable that the Church possessed two aisles from the beginning; for Strype, writing 200 years ago, speaks of it as then consisting of a nave, chancel, and two aisles. Most likely this South aisle has undergone so many repairs that not much of the original fabric remains. The chancel ceiling is undoubtedly original, and much resembles the one to be seen at Stepney, though scarcely so handsome as that of the Mother Church. Most of the repairs to the nave, north aisle and chancel, look like eighteenth century work; and the gallery and internal fittings of the chancel unmistakeably belong to that period.

In fact, the first half of the eighteenth century was a well marked epoch in the history of the Church, and saw some changes take place of considerable importance, both to the Church and Parish. In the first year of that century died Prisca Coborn, the munificent Benefactress of the Parish of Bow, who not only augmented the value of the Benefice

by £20 per annum, a considerable sum in those days, and bequeathed a like annuity to the poor, but also built and endowed a large Charity School for the benefit of the poorer children in the Parish. Of this school, strange to say, nothing now remains to Bow but the name; for, with an apathy incredible, the Parish has allowed the Building, together with its endowments of £400 a year to be alienated and re-erected in the Parish of Stepney. The working classes of Bow were of course the greatest sufferers, but the Church and its congregation also suffered a heavy loss, in being deprived of the Building in which Sunday Schools and other operations now considered essential for Church work were carried on. This loss may be pretty accurately guaged from the fact that it has cost nearly £1800 to erect a Building for the purpose mentioned, to take the place once filled by Prisca Coborn's Schools; and the difficulties experienced in providing this building may perhaps be found to have delayed the restoration of the Church for another generation. However, let that pass; we return to the history of the Church. Shortly after Prisca Coborn's death, her Trustees

erected the present Gallery in the Tower, and, though there is apparently no record in existence of the fact, it is highly probable that the red brick Vestry was added somewhere about the same time, and the interior of the chancel repaired in accordance with the taste of the age—but with little regard to congruity with the original character of the Building. About the same period also a moulded plaster ceiling was placed over the entire nave, designed after the fashion in church architecture in those days which had been set by Wren, and wholly concealing the woodwork of the open roof visible at present. This ceiling remained in existence until 1844, when it was entirely removed, and the beams and rafters of the original roof once more displayed to view.

In the ninth year of the reign of Queen Anne, 1711, an Act of Parliament, followed at intervals by supplementary Acts, was passed providing for the building of fifty new Churches, "in and about the cities of London and Westminster, and the suburbs thereof," which called into existence the present structures of Limehouse, Spitalfields,

and St. George's-in-the-East, each of which now became independent parishes. Under the same acts the Hamlet of Bow was similarly separated from the parish of Stepney, and formed into a parish of its own. The existing Chapel thus became a Parish Church, and was consecrated for that purpose in 1719. The original Deed of Consecration, bearing that date, is still deposited in the Parish chest, though much of it is now illegible; and it appears to have suffered considerable injury from fire—probably a fire which occurred at the Church in April, 1747, and which damaged the Tower and destroyed the existing Church Clock. It was formerly the practice to keep the Church documents in the Tower, and if the Deed of consecration were kept there, together with the rest, as is most probable, at the time of this fire, this will account for its present condition. Thus Bow became an independent Parish; its minister was henceforth styled Rector, and its connection with the mother Parish of Stepney finally ceased. Its first Rector was the Rev. Robert Warren, M.A., who was appointed by Brazenose College, Oxford.

Between 1719 and 1730 the present Rectory house was most likely erected, for the character of its architecture shows it to belong to that date, and in an Act of Parliament obtained by the people of Bow, 1730, and entitled "An Act to make better provision for the maintenance of the Minister of Bow," it is recited in the preamble that the Benefice was now provided with a residence for its Minister. This act directs the Churchwardens to raise a sum of not less than £46 per annum from Pew rents, of which £40 is to be paid to the Rector, and £6 to themselves for Church expenses. The same act also empowers the Parishioners to elect a Lecturer on condition of their finding his stipend. During the rest of that century but little that is worth recording occurred in the history of the Church, unless it be the gift of five of the bells in 1760, and a sixth in 1797; but these are more fully described under the head of "Bells" later on. I have carefully searched the Diocesan records, in order to discover whether any Faculties exist, empowering the Parishioners or Churchwardens to make any of those repairs which were evidently made during this period,

but have been able to find none. No record of Faculties exists during the greater part of the eighteenth century except some of a private character, generally relating to the removal of bodies.

In the early years of the present century the East window, which at that time was only about one-half its present size—the lower part being entirely concealed by brick and stonework—was filled with the stained glass which is now found in the extreme western windows of the aisles; and this was removed some years ago to make way for that which occupies it at the present time. At the same time that this was done the window was restored to those proportions which it no doubt originally possessed. In January, 1829, however, a portion of the upper part of the Tower fell down during the night, and was shortly afterwards rebuilt by the Parishioners. The more recent date of this portion is apparent to every observer. Other changes, such as an addition to the vestry, the re-seating, and the organchamber are within the recollection of the present generation, and are too well known to require any detailed account in a history so brief as this.

Such, as far as I have been able to ascertain it, is the history and such are the changes in the fabric of the Church. There is but little to interest anybody except the Antiquarian and the local Resident. The early period of the Church's history, which would have been the most interesting of all, is too much overshadowed by and interwoven with its more important mother church; and the period of its separate and independent existence has hardly been marked by events sufficiently important to invest it with an interest for the general reader.

The original churchyard was apparently much smaller than the present one, and terminated not far from the point where it is now crossed by the pathway; for in two old prints in my possession, dated 1809 and 1826 respectively, there appear to have been several houses standing on the ground which now forms the western extremity of the churchyard, and which were most likely cleared away in order to enlarge it, and so provide increased burial accommodation for the parishioners. Adjoining the Church on the east there were Sir John Jolles' Schools, now removed to the Old Ford Road, and a

building called the Sexton's House, of which no trace remains. These were removed, in order to extend the churchyard in an eastward direction.

THE REGISTERS.

The Registers of the Church are very complete, going back to the date of the general institution of Parochial Registers in the reign of Henry VIII, the first entry being described as having been made "in y^e^ yeare of our Lord God, 1538." For the first 80 or 90 years, however, the record as now existing is only a transcript or copy (in one handwriting) of the original; and this, I believe, is no uncommon circumstance in the case of Parish Registers. Of course there were not in those days separate Registers for Marriages, Christenings and Burials; one Book contained them all, allowing a separate column for each kind of entry. The entries will enable my readers to form some idea of the size of the population in the days to which they refer. Thus in 1539, the first entire year of which any record was kept, there were 12 Weddings, 18 Baptisms, and 21 Burials (or 'burialls,' as they are called). From these figures it is pretty evident that even in those days Bow could

not have been a place of less than 1000 people, and probably exceeded that number. Like most other places in the neighbourhood of London it suffered from repeated visitations of that scourge of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries—the Plague; and this fact is clearly proved from the entries made in the Burial Register, where a special note is appended to the burials of those who died from this cause. Thus it is related that the burials of those who died from the Plague in the undermentioned years were as follows:—

Year.	No. dying of Plague.	Year.	No. dying of Plague.	Year.	No. dying of Plague.
1577	6	1582	6	1592	7
1578	22	1583	2	1593	56
1581	26	1584	*nil.*	1603	93

These disappearances and recurrences of the pestilence correspond with Defoe's account of it. He says the Plague visited London in 1656, disappeared, and then returned with renewed violence in 1664, and reached its climax in 1665, when 50,000 persons died from it in London alone. Bow seems to have contributed its quota to this mournful sum total, for, although in the year 1665 the cause of

death is not specified in the case of any burial entry, yet when we see that in that year the burials rose to 119, whereas in 1664 they had amounted only to 30, no further words are needed to tell us what was the reason of this terrible increase in the bills of mortality. While I am speaking on the subject of Parish Registers, I may add that those of the Church contain the records of the burials of Valentine Pool, Thomas and Ann Lillye, Prisca Coborn, and other benefactors of the Parish. In the seventeenth century the name of Coborn appears several times, and is spelt variously Colburne and Coburne, as well as Coborn. In the Register of Baptisms there is a marginal note opposite one entry in 1624 to the effect that the child in question was baptised in a font which was "new set up." This probably refers to the present font, which is of marble, and apparently of later date than the original structure of the Church. It is possible it was introduced about that time.

THE MONUMENTS.

The Monuments of the Church can hardly be regarded, either in point of historical interest or in

execution, as equal to those which are often to be found in Old English Churches. The worthies of Bow seldom achieved more than a local celebrity, and were for the most part good, honest citizens and servants of the crown; but apparently with no ambition to wander out of the ordinary track. If there were ever any

> **Hearts once pregnant with celestial fire,**
> **Hands that the rod of empire might have swayed,**

either the opportunity was not given them, or they severed their connection with their native place before they had won their niche in the Temple of Fame. The oldest Monument is a Brass on the inner wall of the South aisle, bearing date 1551, and stating, that near it is buried Grace Amcott, daughter of John Welford, late Alderrman of London. On opposite sides of the chancel are two Monuments—that on the North side erected to Thomas Jordan, Merchant, who died in 1671; and that on the South, with an elaborately carved setting and a Latin inscription, shewing that it is erected to a worthy pair who bore the patronymic of 'Walker,' and died in 1707 and 1712 respectively.—This Monument

possesses the most elaborate sculpture to be found in the Church. There is another Monument on the wall of the North aisle to Thomas, son of one Edward Rust, Dyer, of Old Ford, who died in 1704; one on the South aisle to Mrs. Summers, one of the Benefactors of the Parish, dated 1764; and there are three other Monuments of recent date—one erected to the memories of George, Robert and Richard Crawley, a second to James Harris, a former Parish Clerk, and the third to Mrs. Driffield, wife of the late Rector of Bow. But the largest and most imposing Monuments still remain to be mentioned, viz.: those erected to the memory of Mrs. Prisca Coborn and her daughter Alice. These are placed on the North and South walls of the nave, between the clerestory windows, and extending to the spandrels of the arches, and at once arrest the eye of any one who casts a glance down the Church from either end. I will take Alice Coborn's first, as it is the earliest in point of time. This stands on the North side of the nave, (i.e.) on the left of the spectator as he looks towards the chancel. It has no pretentions to beauty of sculpture, but it bears a most portentous inscription

in Hebrew, Greek and Latin; though why an amiable young lady of sixteen should be made the object of so profound a display of learning, except upon the supposition that the record of a dead person should be given in the dead languages, it is difficult to imagine. The inscription, which is chiefly in Latin, headed by a quotation in Hebrew, was composed by Mr. Wollaston, the lady's intended husband, and states that she died, apparently of small pox (morbo variolarum) in 1689, and was buried on the day of her intended marriage; that she possessed gifts and graces far in advance of her age, and that her lover only half survived her loss. His grief may have been great, but a cynical observer might remark that it seemed as if his aim had been just as much to show his own erudition as the lady's virtues or the magnitude of his affliction. On the whole it is a piece of pedantry, which has been not inaptly treated in being 'skyed,' so that no-one can make it out without the aid of a ladder. I come lastly to the Monument of Mrs. Prisca Coborn, mother of Alice Coborn, perhaps the worthiest of the Bow worthies, and certainly the largest benefactor to the Church

and Parish. This occupies a position on the South side of the nave exactly *vis-a-vis* to that of her daughter, which it slightly exceeds in size and in the ornamental sculpture of its frame. The inscription is sensibly written in English, though the abbreviations and quaint methods of spelling some of the words exhibit a singular contrast in style to the elegant diction of Addison and Steele, who lived and wrote about that time, and whose essays are still regarded by many as models of English prose. It runs as follows:—

"To ye memory of Prisca Coburne, widw. who lyeth buryed in ye ille near this pillar and dyed ye 13th of Nov., 1701, and by her will dated ye 6th of May, 1701, gave ye charities follg. to ye poor inhabitants of this Hamblet, who have no pensions, to be paid as ye will mentions."

Then follows the enumeration of her various bequests for religious and charitable purposes.* It may not be amiss to mention that Prisca Coborn,

* The value of the sums left by Prisca Coborn to the Parish of Bow for religious and charitable purposes, was estimated a few years since as being equivalent to a capital sum of not less than £14,000.

whose maiden name was Prisca Forster, and the record of whose baptism is found in our Registers in the year 1622, was the daughter of one of the ministers of Bow, and appears to have been the widow of a Brewer in the Parish, where she was born and which she desired to benefit by her charities. These are are all the Monuments in the interior of the Church. There are three on the exterior, one of which is completely illegible, another comparatively recent, and the third, which alone possesses any historical interest, is affixed to the outside wall of the South aisle, and states that it was erected to the memory of certain members of a family named Cook, Collar makers to His Majesty, the last of whom, John Cook, died in 1763. The name of this John Cook is also found on some of the Church bells, to the cost of which he was apparently a subscriber. No tomb appears to be of earlier date than the eighteenth century.

Few persons known in history seem to have been connected with Bow. Besides Queen Matilda already mentioned, the only other person of note who seems to have had much connection with the Parish

is Edmund, Lord Sheffield, one of Queen Elizabeth's sea captains, who distinguished himself in the fight with the Spanish Armada. He is said to have resided here.* The name of the Parish is mentioned in 'Pepys' Diary' and in the 'Ingolsby Legends,' and Defoe speaks of Bow Bridge in a way which indicates that it was a well known point or object in his own day. Foxe, in his Book of Martyrs, says that Bow or, as he writes it, Stratford the Bow, was the scene of the burning of one person for heresy in the time of Queen Mary.

THE BELLS.

Any account of "Bow Church" would be incomplete without a reference to "Bow Bells," though these are not the Bells which can claim the credit of having recalled Whittington with a chime so prophetic of his future greatness. Such an honour belongs to the Bells of St. Mary-le-Bow, Cheapside, and I have no desire to rob that Church of its traditions. Still there are few peals of Bells which can send forth a sweeter or more melodious chime than ours, or can better interpret the changing moods of human

* Lord Strafford's Letters. Vol I.

nature; whether it be the chime which summons worshippers to God's House, the merry joyous peal which rings out at a Wedding or ushers in a New Year, or the mournful knell which tells the inhabitants that another soul has passed away. Of Bells the Church has eight—five given in 1760, and each bearing the following inscription;—

John Cook, Collar maker to His Majesty,
Principal subscriber, 1760.
Lester and Pack, London, fecit. [Query—Wouldn't 'fecerunt' have been better Latin? W. P. I.]

A sixth Bell on which the hours are struck is inscribed as follows:—

Reverend Harrison Eccles, M.A., Rector.
Richard Lovelidge, John Giles, } Churchwardens, St. Mary, Stratford Bow, 1797.

Two other Bells—one called the tenor—were added in 1858, and are inscribed with the name of the Rev. George Townshend Driffield, M.A., Rector, and Walter Goddard and Richard Walter Crawley, Churchwardens.

THE CLOCK.

Even the Church Clock is not without its history. It appears to have originally been a hanging Clock, projecting at right angles to the Tower, but,

according to an inscription placed on the back of the works, the dial was destroyed by a fire which occurred at the Church on April 7th, 1747, and the present dial was erected in December of the same year. This fire is the one to which reference is made on page 14, and in memory of which a stone bearing an inscription still exists in one of the houses opposite the Church.

COMMUNION PLATE.

The Church is well provided in this respect, having a flagon, two chalices and two patens. Of these, one paten was presented by Prisca Coborn in 1683, and a chalice provided by subscription about the same time. Towards the cost of this chalice, Valentine Pool, one of the Benefactors of the Church and Parish, is recorded to have given the sum of £3. The large handsome flagon bears the name of the Rev. Henry Lambe, L.L.D., and was presented in 1718—the year before the Church was consecrated and separated from Stepney. The other chalice and paten were presented in 1813.

I have now completed the description and history of the Church and its Memorials, so far as I have been able to gather them by a careful and patient investigation. To myself the work has been one of deep interest, and I am glad to place on record these facts which I have been able to glean respecting the sacred Edifice in which it has been my privilege to officiate for the last five years. My object has been to deepen the interest taken by the Parishioners in the time-honoured Building which they have inherited from their forefathers, and to induce them to take measures for putting it into a a better state of repair. The dilapidated condition of the exterior impresses every beholder, and usually conveys the idea that the Church is of much older date than is the case. Of the fine West window and doorway the mullions and jambs have almost perished, and the buttresses of the Tower have well nigh crumbled away. The following remark is made upon the condition of the Church by Mr. W. Besant in his well known novel "All sorts and conditions of Men." (ch. VII.) "There is not much in the Bow Road except the beautiful Old

Church of Bow, standing in the middle of the road, crumbling slowly away in the East End fog, with its narrow strip of crowded churchyard. One hopes that before it has *quite* crumbled away some one will go and make a picture of it—an etching would be best." Such is the opinion of one who must be deemed an impartial witness. Surely a Building which has lived through four centuries of our country's history and is now

Grown grey beneath the shadowy touch of time,

deserves better treatment at our hands. Its style of architecture is a good one, belonging to one of the best periods of Church Architecture—the *Renaissance* —and is well worthy of preservation. Our age is one which has shown itself to be not insensible to the value of Ancient Monuments, and if we neglect that with which we are most closely connected and with which so much of our local history is interwoven, we shall show ourselves strangely unlike the mass of our fellow-countrymen, and hardly worthy heirs of the legacy which the munificence of former ages has provided for our use.